

# Heritage Area Forum: East Goes West



## National Park Service-National Heritage Areas

### Heritage Area Forum: East Goes West

July 23-24, 2002  
Denver, Colorado

A Collaboration between  
the National Park Service,  
Sister Federal Agencies,  
National Heritage Areas,  
and Other Interested  
Organizations.

### Why Here? Why Now?

**Peggy Halderman:** Peggy Halderman, Assistant Regional Director in the Intermountain Region, welcomed participants to the forum and described the impetus for the meeting. Heritage Areas are coming to the West; several potential areas in the Intermountain Region are exploring their options. The West is eager to learn from the older Heritage Areas in the eastern parts of the country, but the special needs of the West must be addressed as new western Heritage Areas are established.

**Brenda Barrett:** Brenda Barrett, National Park Service National Heritage Area Coordinator, laid out three goals for the meeting.

- Share Information
- Learn from each other-especially addressing issues in the West
- Craft better NPS response to Heritage Area needs



After a morning of thought provoking and entertaining speakers this audience is about to be put to work. The afternoon sessions were spent in breakout groups charged with first brainstorming and then synthesizing.



Karen Wade

### Thoughts and Hopes: Karen Wade

Karen Wade, Intermountain Regional Director for the National Park Service, inspired forum participants with her thoughts about the Heritage Area movement using her own heritage as an example. She envisions this as conservation of the homeland. For her this evokes tumbleweeds and turkey vultures, the Navajo and vast open ranchlands. Using a favorite quote she described this movement as being about "a piece of the environment claimed by feeling". Her hope and prayer is that the heritage area movement really catches on in the West. The story of the ranch and the West is fragile.

## What IS a Heritage Area?

From the left below, Mike Creasey Executive Director of John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley Heritage Corridor and Jim Pepper formally from Blackstone and now an Assistant Regional Director in the Northeast were joined by Constance Bodurow, Executive Director of the Automobile National Heritage Area and Dan Rice, Executive Director of the Ohio and Erie Canal National Heritage Area to answer that question.



**Jim Pepper:** Jim Pepper described a Heritage Area as:

- A Strategy
- A Framework
- A Delivery System
- Agenda Setting
- A Funding Vehicle
- Network for Construction
- Regional Planning

All heritage area work is motivated by a yearning for authenticity. Quoting Robert Melnick, "There are places in this country we look at everyday, and never really see; they are the landscapes of heritage, places that seem so natural, that they go unrecognized, misunderstood, unprotected and mismanaged." These are our heritage areas.

**Constance Bodurow:** Automobile Heritage Area has just completed its planning process with the final product approved by the Secretary in May 2002. Through the open public planning process that engaged as many of the 6,000,000 people within the new National Heritage Area as feasible, Automobile defined its own mission. That mission describes what a National Heritage Area is to the people in Automobile NHA: education, revitalization, tourism, enhanced quality of life, and recreation.

**Dan Rice:** A Heritage Area doesn't manage anything. As Heritage Area staff the job is to facilitate and bring the toolbox to get results. Projects fail because of lack of vision and lack of cooperation. Through facilitation both can be overcome. What is most exciting about Heritage Area work is people and passion. Heritage Areas are about leveraging money, getting results, and having fun.

**Mike Creasey:** John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is one of the oldest. Throughout its history there has been lots of visioning. After 16 years the visions are true. It has been about making connections in the Blackstone Valley. Now it has become a place to come. The next steps will be through the Committee for Tomorrow. When Federal funding for the National Heritage Areas ends in 2006, what will the next twenty years bring?

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## The Process:

On Tuesday afternoon, Joe DiBello facilitated a session in which participants identified challenges, special circumstances, and opportunities in developing heritage areas. Participants then grouped the points made during the discussion into two general categories: NPS Roles and Partnerships & Collaborations. These served as the starting point for two breakout sessions of four groups each.

### **East Meets West Participants**

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## **Tuesday Afternoon Discussion: Notes from the Wall National Park Service (NPS) ROLES**

Manage expectations of what we can do...balance grassroots versus catalyst role

Be careful how we define the heritage areas...know that each is distinctive

The "process" of National Heritage designation offers the opportunity to convene heritage interests

Attitude of NPS/FEDS "more positive" so this offers lots of opportunity/potential

Review and development of heritage area plans

Opportunity to educate people about NPS what we do, why?

### **Concerns NPS Needs to Address**

What are the criteria? When is a heritage area appropriate?

How are the areas managed?

How many can there be? Should there be more?

How to answer when groups ask how to get started? How to get going? How to get designated?

General suspicion of the Federal Government-we are here to help

Turf wars and finding ways to get past them-public cannot tell the difference between Federal agencies-must find ways to cooperate

Groups and new heritage areas do not understand the value of NPS leadership and planning assistance, nurturing, collaborating

### **Western Issues**

Working with special client culture. How do we share education about Hispanic\Native American culture with rest of the world?

Traditional community concerns vs. impacts of increased tourism  
Where the built heritage is in ruins, heritage areas can add a human cultural dimension to the ruins

What is the history of the West? How does it stack up to or relate to East? History is less valued than scenery and nature in West

How do we manage vernacular landscape versus the primo landscapes?

Loss of working landscape e.g. agricultural/ranching heritage

## PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, et al need to work in partnership-particularly off of fed lands, large landscapes, conservation areas, monuments, W&S rivers, partnership collaboration

How do we continue to use federal land/heritage development and tourism?

Working with partners nonprofits-skill development

How can we take/make better advantage of existing Rivers and Trail Conservation Assistance, Historic American Engineering Record, National Historic Landmark programs?

Heritage coordination (State coordinators, inside NPS, NPS Regions, Washington Office) avoids duplication and encourages coordination and sharing field work

Bring historic bridges and roads to attention of public and other feds as part of heritage conservation

Share/document work through universities

### Developing a Toolbox

Need to develop and share best practices

Find ways to increase sharing of information and the 'circle'

What are the best management practices we can document measure, share, a variety of tools

Connect authorization plans, results to present a national strategy

Economic potential, impacts and benefits of heritage areas on quality of life document case studies

### Working with Communities

Go into communities with open mind ... ask what they are trying to do and examine a variety of options

Areas/communities are interested in learning, recognition and communicating their special qualities.

Smaller communities that wish to remain the same versus those promoting use or tourism

Celebrate, document the workplace and built environment for people to learn/appreciate place

### Participants (Continued)

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## From the Morning Breakout Groups Focused on NPS Roles

### Sam Stokes, Facilitator

1. We need clear guidance on what we can say to organizers who want to establish an NHA and we need to figure out how we can best get this information out to them. Printed material--for instance on the benefits--would help, as well as information on the web. The Alliance could be particularly helpful on political guidance to communities.
2. We need to figure out how to organize and build capacity within NPS and with partners to better provide information to NHAs. Who pays for assistance needs to be resolved.
3. We need to articulate the NPS vision for heritage areas. What are the desired outcomes? Are NHAs the wave of the future for NPS, or are they going to be the poor relatives of the NPS units?

### Martha Crusius, Facilitator

1. NPS role-interconnecting (Map of NHAs, Website)
2. Help areas recognize and achieve all the pieces (Resources, Marketing, Stories, Facilitate connection to place)
3. Guidance and support within NPS for committing resources to NHAs, pre- and post-designation

### Leslie Peterson, Facilitator

1. There are opportunities to link heritage areas to other existing National Park Service (NPS)/federal programs.
2. A heritage area central point-of-contact (POC) at the regional and/or state level would improve communication and coordination among heritage areas, NPS staff, and other agencies.
3. There needs to be sufficient funding to support infrastructure of the NPS Heritage Area Program.
4. Someone (NPS, Alliance of National Heritage Areas, ?) needs to establish basic criteria for heritage areas, but these criteria need to be flexible enough to address each heritage area's diversity and individuality.

### Peter Samuel, Facilitator

1. Need basic informational material (Web Site, Brochure/Info Pack)
2. Establish Formal Network of Agencies (or Informal)



Joe DiBello facilitated the large group sessions and coordinated the small group breakout sessions.



Much was accomplished informally as East met West and staff from multiple organizations exchanged information, best practices, and views.



Dan Rice, far left, and Augie Carlino, near right, past and current Chairs of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, gave invaluable insights into the working of Heritage Areas on the ground and useful avenues for NPS to pursue if we are to work with the Alliance successfully.



Brenda Barrett summarized the history of the Heritage Area movement and provided up-to-the-minute updates on current legislation in Congress. For more information contact Brenda at: [brenda\\_barrett@nps.gov](mailto:brenda_barrett@nps.gov) or (202) 354-2222



Augie Carlino provides a history of the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and insights into their relationship with the National Park Service. Augie can be reached at [acarlino@riversofsteel.com](mailto:acarlino@riversofsteel.com)



Peggy Halderman, a primary instigator of the *East Meets West* Forum, describes Heritage Area management in the Intermountain Region and the National Park Service Partnership Initiative. Peggy can be reached at [peggy\\_halderman@nps.gov](mailto:peggy_halderman@nps.gov).

## Legislative Update

**Brenda Barrett**-There are 28 Heritage Area bills now in some stage of the Congressional process of a total of 55 National Park Service bills wending their way through Congress. Of the bills, H.R. 2388, referred to as the Hefley bill is the most overarching. It would provide an umbrella authorization for National Heritage Areas. Some of its most important provisions include:

- National Heritage Areas have nationally significant stories
- Local public notice before designation but not individual notification and approval
- Flexibility for feasibility studies along 3 different tracks
- Required Management Plans
- Specific roles for the National Park Service
- 5% of the program funding earmarked for National Park Service professional and administrative support

## Alliance of National Heritage Areas: What Do We Do?

**Augie Carlino**-Before the Omnibus Bill for national heritage areas appropriations appeared likely to pass in 1997, the main coordinator of the heritage area movement was the National Trust for Historic Preservation. There was no formal group of heritage areas. With the Omnibus Bill, the National Park Service was formally designated as the lead federal partner. Augie described the early days of working with NPS as adversarial and attributed the formation of the Alliance as a response to that poor relationship. Those days are behind the Alliance which has formed a solid working relationship with NPS and has become the recognized leader of the heritage area movement. Three particularly noteworthy initiatives include:

- The Heritage Areas Institute which will provide training to potential new heritage areas, partners, and Alliance members. The first training session focused on How and What Are Heritage Areas? and How Do You Create Them?
- The broadening of the Alliance with inclusion of organizations such as the National Association of State Historic Preservation Officers, the National Trust, fledgling heritage areas and many others. These are included with varying levels of participatory and voting rights.
- The International Heritage Area Conference scheduled in Pittsburgh in June of 2003.

## Partnerships in the National Park Service

**Peggy Halderman**-Peggy brought us up-to-date on two exciting National Park Service initiatives in progress.

- The Partnership Council will hold its first meeting in October. This is a new entity to coordinate and communicate among partners that includes all NPS associateships and Regions.
- The planning for the Partnership Conference in San Francisco scheduled for November 2003 is well underway.

**Participants (Continued)**

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**From the Afternoon Breakout Groups Focused on Heritage Area Partnerships and Collaborations****Martha Crusius, Facilitator**

1. Cultivating "the masses" through strategic use of media to develop advocacy base and awareness
2. Strategic Partnerships (Alliance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), Sustainable economies-working landscapes, Linkages with National Trust for Historic Preservation, SHPOs, Fish and Wildlife, Bureau of Land Management, natural resource groups, Federal Housing Administration)
3. Reaching Superintendents and parks (Demonstrating benefits, connecting parks to NHA's and Alliance of Heritage Areas and benefits and programs)

**Peter Samuel, Facilitator**

1. Need dedicated staff who focuses just on Heritage Areas and collaboration - should proactively work across NPS and with alliance to determine use of 5%-Heritage budget
2. Create an inter-regional council of NPS heritage experts to meet regularly
3. After NPS nationwide strategy is developed NPS will work with state and other Fed agencies and Heritage Alliance to identify needs and resources and develop strategies to meet that need-develop team of NPS Heritage experts who can provide assistance to regions that are just starting their program

**Sam Stokes, Facilitator**

1. An MOU. between NPS and the Alliance could lead to more technical assistance from NPS and possibly an accreditation program for NHAs, based on standards developed by the Alliance and enforced through peer review. American Association of Museums and National Recreation and Park Association have potential models.
2. NPS could provide additional assistance to NHAs through Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance, the National Register program, Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, Interpretation, and other existing NPS programs. Additional assistance will depend on clear understandings between NPS and the Alliance and better internal coordination within NPS. In some cases, it will require explicit authorization from Congress and dedicated funding.

**Leslie Peterson, Facilitator**

1. Need for a central clearinghouse -There should be an inter/intra agency program, web-based information sharing, tapping into existing models of partnerships, sharing best practices/lessons learned, an interagency, searchable, web-based "skills pool" (listing of people, their expertise, and contact information).



2. Need for capacity building - We need to build NPS's/other agencies' skills in convening and working with partners, increase our skills in obtaining alternative funding through grant writing and fund raising.

3. Need for changing corporate culture's view/value of partnership skills - If NPS is charged with developing partnerships in its management policies and directives, the agency needs to back this up with capacity-building training and tools.

**Summary**-There appear to be four themes that reoccur throughout the breakout groups.

1. We need to build a clearinghouse that includes information (maps, best practices, contacts, community tools, etcetera) and expertise (subject matter experts, single point of contact). Overwhelming breakout groups suggested the Web as an important tool of this clearinghouse.

2. We need dedicated funding source(s) and staff to provide heritage area services.

3. We must be prepared to serve new heritage areas and areas that are considering being heritage areas. This need runs the gamut from being able to describe the basic criteria required to be a heritage area through having a team of experts ready to assist new areas with planning, local capacity building, working with Federal funds, and project implementation.

4. We need to build links within NPS and outside of NPS. Within NPS there should be inclusion of Superintendents and programs as wide-ranging as HABS/HAER and RTCA. We should work with sister Federal agencies from the FHA, through BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service. Outside of the Federal Government, the link to the Alliance of National Heritage Areas is the most fundamental. However, links to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, State Historic Preservation Offices, and other long-time partners of NPS and national heritage areas, are also critical. Beyond the 'choir' Heritage Areas provide an opportunity to cultivate the masses through new partnerships as well.



After wrapping up the Forum, participants literally take a hike.



This reprise of the Heritage Area Forum: *East Meets West* was compiled by Linda Seifert ; all photos are by Peter Samuel. Both are from the Philadelphia Support Office of the National Park Service.

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